What is claimed is:

1. A method for scanning and cutting sheet-type work material, said method comprising the steps of:

a) providing a layer of sheet-type work material carried by a support surface;

b) providing the means to automatically scan and cut said work material;

c) automatically scanning said work material to determine a periphery thereof, and to allow for the detection of flaws in said work material;

d) establishing the layout of a marker on said work material;

e) nesting a pattern piece onto said work material;

f) nesting a subsequent pattern piece onto said work material while simultaneously cutting the previously nested pattern piece from said work material; and

g) repeating steps e and f until all of said pattern pieces are cut from said marker.

2. A method as defined by claim 1, wherein:

said step of providing the means to automatically scan and cut said work material further includes:

providing a scanning and cutting table having, a frame, said support surface being mounted to said frame, a carriage mounted to said frame for movement back-and-forth in a first coordinate direction in response to commands issued from a controller; and wherein said step of providing the means to automatically scan and cut said work material includes:

providing a cutting head and a scanning head mounted on said carriage, each for movement independently of the other back-and-forth along the carriage in response to commands issued from the controller in a second coordinate direction approximately perpendicular to said first coordinate direction.

3. A method as defined by claim 1, wherein said work material comprises a hide.

4. A method as defined by claim 1 including the further step of providing a vacuum generator for drawing said work material against said support surface.

5. A method as defined by claim 4, further comprising the steps of:

providing a layer of impermeable material;

covering said work material with said layer of impermeable material; and

operating said vacuum generator to draw said work material and said layer of impermeable material down against said support surface.

6. A method as defined by claim 1, wherein said step of automatically scanning includes, automatically detecting said flaws in said work material.